

Not A Day Goes By by PeonyParty

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Summary:

“Mike,” she says into the crook of his shoulder, and he grips her tighter. He has waited for this for so long, survived on pure hope. And this is his reward.

Eleven and Mike reunite. Post Season 2.

Not A Day Goes By

Waiting for her to return from Hawkins Lab is somehow more painful than the year of waiting, of not knowing if she was even alive. He'd had a taste of her, and now she was gone again, fighting everyone's battles. Saving the town. Saving them.

She succeeded. The gate is closed, that much is obvious. So he sits on the couch at Byers house, waiting for a sign. Waiting for her to come back.

"Mom's on the way to pick us up," Nancy says cautiously, waiting for a negative reaction. "Hopper and El are on their way back now. He radioed that everything is fine."

Mike stirs. "She's okay?"

A nod, and a sigh. "Yeah, she's okay."

"I can't go home yet."

"We have to. Will needs rest. Everyone needs rest."

"I'm fine. I just want to see her." He interrupts, getting off the couch and walking out. Exasperated, Nancy sits down instead.

The cool, crisp autumn air sends shivers down Mike's body. But it's better than sitting around inside, talking to Nancy about things she can't understand. She doesn't know what it's like to be so desperate.

Front lights pierce the darkness, and in the frenzy of emotions, he runs up to the car before it has even parked. And he sees her, leaning a little, so pale she's almost glowing, eyes barely open. But she perks up when their eyes lock, her mouth twisting into a small smile. One just for him.

"El," he pleads, opening the door of the car, and supporting her lest she falls out. "Are you okay?"

"Fine," she says timidly, reaching out to hold his hand. He interlaces his fingers with hers, and she's so cold it physically hurts him.

Hopper observes from the drivers seat, rubs his eyes with exhaustion.

"Don't overstimulate her," he says, before climbing out of the car.

"She needs rest."

"You closed the gate," Mike says, ignoring him. "You saved everyone. The whole world probably."

El looks down, letting the silence linger. Somewhere in the house, the

flurry of voices indicates a happy reunion. A car approaches in the distance.

"I'm happy," she says, as if to no one in particular.

Mike nods, his eyes so glued on her that the rest of Hawkins could crumble away and he wouldn't notice.

"I'm happy you're home," he whispers, leaning in to embrace her small body. Her hair tickles his cheek, a new sensation he can't wait to get used to.

Then it's morning, and it's been three days since El closed the gate.

"Can I go visit her?" He begs a second day in a row now.

Mrs. Wheeler sighs in exasperation. "Mike, I think we need to talk."

"About what?" he retorts. "About what?"

There's an artificial silence in the house, and it makes him uneasy.

After breakfast, he sits on the couch with his mom. Dad is on the recliner, frowning slightly.

"We know how much you care about El," Mrs. Wheeler says carefully. She's clearly practiced the speech, tried to make it as least abrasive as possible. "But we don't know if you spending so much time with her is a good idea."

"What do you mean?"

"We don't know if she's a good influence on you, Mike."

He recoils. "El saved this whole town! She's- she's so smart, and she-"

"Mike," his dad interrupts angrily.

"We know that El is a very special girl," his mom says, shooting the dad a look. "But since you've met her, you've been very moody and very strange. You've been making some bad decisions, Mike."

"Because I thought she was dead!" he yells.

"Don't yell at your mother!"

Mrs. Wheeler sighs. "We just don't want you to get hurt again. You're too young to-"

"I won't get hurt. I-" he shuts his eyes. "I love El, okay?"

The silence that follows is almost painful.

"What do you even know about love, boy?" His dad says finally, and Mike takes it as a cue to walk out.

The conversation fills him with rage, and he throws the door shut behind him, ready to knock things over and make a scene. But there's a knock on the door, and it's Nancy, looking at him smugly.

“Wipe the tears,” she says.

“What do you want?”

“I know how to get to El,” she says. “And I’m sure I could get Jonathan to drive you, if you wanted.”

Mike snorts. “Why would you even bother?”

Nancy smiles. “I just think it’s cute. My little brother having this huge crush.”

Mike flinches at her words.

“Plus, she saved the town, so I figure I’d be doing her a small favour.”

The anticipation of seeing Eleven again burns under his skin. He radioed her earlier to say that he’d come to visit, to make sure Hopper didn’t crucify him. And now, standing in front of the door, knocking and waiting is enough to make him feel faint. With a few quick clicks, the door unlocks and opens, and El runs towards him with such fervour that their hug nearly knocks all the air out of him. “Mike,” she says into the crook of his shoulder, and he grips her tighter. He has waited for this for so long, survived on pure hope. And this is his reward.

She gives him a tour of the house, the kitchen, the living room, her bedroom. Everything about the place feels very Hopper, but this is her home now, and he’s happy that she has someone like him to take care of her. She deserves the best family, and maybe he can be that.

“I can’t believe Hopper kept us apart for so long,” he says, sitting on the couch as El fetches them orange juice.

“It was dangerous,” El says from the kitchen.

“Yeah,” Mike concedes, taking the glass of juice from her hands with a smile.

“I went to see you one time,” she says as she nestles next to him on the couch. “At the school.”

His eyebrows furrow in thought, and as the realization hits him, he gulps. “You made Max fall off her skateboard.”

She frowns.

“Why didn’t you say anything?”

“I didn’t want to interrupt,”

“El,” Mike says, turning his body towards her. “Max and I, we’re, we’re just friends.”

“I know.” She says quietly.

“I didn’t even like her at all when she first showed up,” He explains.

"Lucas and Dustin kept dragging me into their little love triangle."

"Love triangle?"

"It's when two people like the same person."

"Do you like Max now?" she asks cautiously, as though not really wanting to know the answer.

"Yeah, we're cool now."

El picks at the hem of her sweater, and realization dawns on him once more.

"El, I don't like her like that."

She looks up at him, an expression of confusion.

"She's my friend."

The confusion isn't much lessened by that statement.

"What are we?"

And there it is. The fateful question that sends Mike's blood pressure to new heights.

"Uh," he says to buy himself some more time. "Well, when two people like each other a lot, they are a couple."

"Couple?"

"Yeah, boyfriend and girlfriend."

El nods, attempting to process the information.

"Are you my boyfriend?" She asks finally.

"Yeah," Mike says, exhaling hard. "Yeah, if you want me to be."

She nods thoughtfully, then drinks her juice, trying to hide the smile. And he sits there too, watching her in his peripheral vision, trying not to float away from the joy of it all.

"You're just a ray of sunshine today, aren't you?" Dustin says at their lockers before class.

Mike grimaces.

"He probably went to see Eleven on the weekend," Lucas teases, takes a book out of the locker, and slams it shut.

"So what if I did," Mike snaps.

Dustin claps him on the shoulder. "All the power to ya!"

"Is she doing okay?" Max asks.

"Yeah, she's just mostly bored." He says. "I was thinking maybe we can all go see her sometime. To keep her company."

"Uh, yeah." Max says, somewhat reluctantly.

She's still reluctant even as they enter El's new abode. Perhaps it's the idea of being in El's domain that makes her uncomfortable, or maybe

it's the fact that she doesn't know how to fix the situation.

"Hey El," she says softly, keeping close to Lucas. "Can we talk?"

El furrows her brows, but leads her into the bedroom anyways.

"She's not going to kill her in there, is she?" Lucas says, concern in his voice.

"What the hell Lucas," Mike says in return.

In the bedroom, Max can barely get any words out. El is looking at her curiously, like she's trying to understand what Max could possibly want from her.

"I know you don't like me," she says finally.

El considers.

"But I never tried to replace you, and even if I did, that would never happen."

"Why?"

"Why?" Max scoffs. "Because you have superpowers? Because Mike is like in love with you, that's why."

El blinks.

Max rolls her eyes. "Look, I just want to be friends, okay? I really like the guys, and I think you're really cool too. I just don't want you to hate me."

"I don't hate you." El says, as though that's the most obvious thing in the world.

"Okay, because you totally ignored me and then-"

"I don't hate you." El repeats.

They watch a movie that evening. El lays her head on Mike's shoulder, who can barely handle that, never mind the sideways, teasing looks from his friends.

Author's Note:

Leave me a comment to add fuel to this Mileven fanfiction writing fire!